

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8703

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JCS

DEPCHIEF UDORN

S E C R E T BANGKOK 18710

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS,LA,TH

SUBJ: LAO MILITARY TRAINING IN THAILAND

1. IN MEETING WITH CHIEF OF STAFF, THAI SUPREME COMMAND, GENERAL KRIANGSAK CHOMANAN NOVEMBER 25, EMBASSY (POMIL COUNS) RAISED PROBLEM OF LACK OF THAI AUTHORIZATION FOR CONTINUATION OF LAO MILITARY TRAINING BY RTARF IN ABSENCE WRITTEN REQUEST FROM LAO GOVERNMENT. WE MENTIONED THAT IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH LT.GE. CHAROEN, KRIANGSAK'S DEPUTY, CHAROEN HAD SUGGESTED POSSIBILITY OF LETTER OF REQUEST FROM LAO MILITARY, WHICH WE HAD UNDERTAKEN TO EXPLORE WITH EMBASSY VIENTIANE. WE TOLD KRIANGSAK THAT WE HAD NOW DISCUSSED MATTER WITH EMBASSY VIENTIANE, WHICH WAS DOUBTFUL AS TO WHETHER LAO WRITTEN REQUEST OF ANY SORT COULD BE GENERATED, AND WHICH WONDERED WHETHER ORAL REQUEST WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THAI.

2. KRIANGSAK SAID THAT THAI NATIONAL DEFENSE COUNCIL, WHICH HAD BEEN SEIZED OF MATTER, HAD CONCLUDED THAT IT INVOLVED BASIC FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS THAT HAD TO BE DEALT WITH AT TOP LEVEL. THAILAND WAS NOW WORKING OUT ITS FUTURE RELATIONS WITH LAOS WITHIN CONTEXT OF NEW LAOTIAN POLITICAL SCENE. THAI FOREIGN MINISTER CHARUNPHAN'S

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RECENT VISIT TO VIENTIANE HAD BEEN PART OF THIS EVOLUTIONARY

PROCESS. PENDING CLEARER INSIGHT INTO WHERE AFFAIRS IN LAOS WERE GOING AND HOW THIS WOULD IMPACT ON THAI POLICY TOWARD LAOS, RTG WISHED TO AVOID POTENTIALLY PREJUDICIAL ACTIONS THAT MIGHT GET IT CAUGHT BETWEEN LAOTIAN RIGHT AND LEFT. IN THIS LIGHT, EVEN RECEIPT OF LETTER OF REQUEST FOR LAO TRAINING WOULD BE OF NO AVAIL. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, KRIANGSAK SAID THAT IF EMBASSY WISHED TO PURSUE MATTER FURTHER, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WOULD BE APPROPRIATE PLACE.

3. WE CAREFULLY EXPLAINED NEED FOR LAO TRAINING AND COST CONSEQUENCES IF THIS TRAINING HAD TO BE CONDUCTED IN US. KRIANGSAK MERELY REPLIED THAT MATTER WAS "OUT OF MY HANDS."

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY PLANS TO CARRY QUESTION FORWARD WITH MFA, BUT IF KRIANGSAK'S DESCRIPTION OF STATE OF PLAY IS ACCURATE, WE FORESEE NO EARLY RESOLUTION OF CURRENT IMPASSE ON LAO TRAINING. WE DO NOT RULE OUT, HOWEVER, THAT GOVERNMENT-LEVEL LETTER OF REQUEST FROM PGNU WOULD SUFFICE TO OBTAIN THAI APPROVAL OF CONTINUED TRAINING. WE RECOGNIZE THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF OBTAINING SUCH LETTER. PRHAPS THE VIENTIANE MISSION MIGHT DISCUSS THE PROBLEM WITH APPROPRIATE LAO OFFICIALS OR MILITARY WHO MIGHT IN TURN APPROACH THE THAI IN EFFORT TO WORK OUT MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY SOLUTION. KINTNER

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